



Winter 2002

In this issue of the *Standard Update*, read all about the recent Environmental Data Registry (EDR) User's Conference—who attended, what happened, and plans for upcoming activities.

EPA Sponsors Conference for EDR Users

On January 24, 2002, EPA's Office of Environmental Information (OEI) hosted a conference for users of the EDR and its associated registries. The purpose of the conference was to enhance user understanding, answer questions, and gather feedback on how the EDR could be improved to better serve user needs. The conference was successful in training users in core business areas of the EDR.

The conference attracted 50 users, about half of which were from EPA. Others in attendance were primarily contractors supporting EPA programs; interested individuals from other government agencies, including the Veterans Health Administration, the Defense Information Systems Agency, and Environment Canada; and representatives from the Chemical Abstracts Service.

In a pre-meeting questionnaire, the majority of attendees characterized themselves as having some level of familiarity with the EDR. Users also expressed interest in future enhancements to the registries, relationship of the registries to other metadata repositories like the Environmental Information Management System (EIMS), plans for storing eXtensible Markup Language (XML) tags on the EDR, and the ability of the registries to support more general guidance.

The event combined presentations with hands-on sessions to reinforce user learning and encourage

participation. The initial presentations covered EPA's information integration efforts and the Agency's strategy for developing and maintaining metadata. These presentations were followed by a general overview of the EDR and its associated registries, which include the Substance Registry System (SRS), the Chemical Registry System (CRS), the Biology Registry System (BioRS), and the Terminology Reference System (TRS).

Presentations during the afternoon session described how to use the various EDR components to support data standards implementation, systems development, data harmonization, environmental terminology, and XML tag standardization. Two hands-on sessions gave participants the opportunity to gain familiarity with the EDR, and to practice performing various operations. The conference concluded with a final question and answer session where participants requested an ongoing dialogue on EDR issues.



Pat Garvey (OEI) captivates participants at the EDR Users Conference

Those who responded to the conference evaluation forms indicated that the majority of them found the event informative, and would be interested in additional fora. Most participants found the materials provided and the hands-on sessions to be valuable. The remarks contained several positive comments, such as “Very worthwhile,” “I found out about areas on the EDR Web site I never knew existed!” and “Excellent EDR User Conference...do it again and again and again!”

Responding to User Feedback

Users recommended improvements to the application interface, data content, software functionality, and the process for how data standards are developed and implemented. Questions and comments from those attending are being reviewed, and a list of software and data requirements is being developed and prioritized. Changes already in the process of being implemented include enhanced search performance for the CRS; site redesign to improve access to downloadable code sets; improvements to the Compare Tool (a tool designed to support data harmonization); and inclusion of XML tags associated with standard data elements. The results of these efforts will appear in the March 2002 release of the EDR registries.

Upcoming Events

Over the next few months, EPA will be involved with EDR outreach efforts at the following events:

- The Web-Enabled Government Conference in Washington, D.C. on March 6, 2002;
- EPA’s Office of Environmental Information’s National Meeting in Chicago, Illinois on March 13-14, 2002;
- The 14th Annual Data Management Association (DAMA) International Symposium, in San Antonio, Texas, from April 29 to May 2, 2002; and
- The International Forum of Standardization for Metadata and E-Business, in Seoul, Korea, on April 29-30, 2002.

For additional information on the recent EDR User’s Conference or upcoming events involving the EDR, contact Michael Pendleton, Data Standards Branch, Office of Information Collection, pendleton.michael@epa.gov.

The *Standard Update*, EPA’s newsletter about data standards, contains information you can read and reuse. For more information on any newsletter topic, see the Environmental Data Registry (EDR) www.epa.gov/edr/. The EDR is your source for *Standard Update* back issues and a vehicle for reader comments.



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